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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement presented by New Japan Women's Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Statement

The forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to conduct the ten-year review and appraisal of the Beijing Platform for Action is being held in the 60th year after the end of World War II, the foundation of the United Nations and the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki where atomic bombs were used against humanity for the first time in history.

As a women's organization of the A-bombed Japan, the New Japan Women's Association (NJWA) has placed the task of achieving a peaceful world without nuclear weapons at the top of its agenda since its foundation. Of the 6,000 signatures of Japanese people in support of the appeal for the elimination of nuclear weapons, which were submitted to the United Nations in 2000, NJWA collected 1,000.

To make the 60th year of the A-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a turning point for a world without nuclear weapons and war, where the peace-related principles of the United Nations Charter are respected, a signature campaign is being promoted internationally in support of the appeal, "Abolition of Nuclear Weapons, Now — Let there be no more Hiroshimas and no more Nagasakis". It calls on the governments of nuclear weapons States to neither use, threaten to use nor develop nuclear weapons, and to take immediate steps for their abolition; and on the governments of all countries to take action for the conclusion of an international treaty for the abolition of nuclear weapons. NJWA is taking an active part in this campaign.

NJWA urges governments to accelerate efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, stop spending resources in military spending, and work for comprehensive disarmament. In addition to the increased participation of women and inclusion of gender perspectives in conflict resolution and post-conflict peacebuilding processes, it is necessary to establish rules for peace based on the United Nations Charter, with the view of preventing conflicts and wars from occurring in the first place. In this regard, we underline the importance of the Government of Japan to observe the Constitution that renounces war in its article 9, and of governments of other countries to insert in their constitutions a war-renouncing clause similar to ours, as proposed during the United Nations Millennium Forum.

On introducing gender perspectives in macroeconomics, NJWA underscores that amidst the globalization of the economy, destruction of the local economy due to the expansion of multinational corporations, increased unemployment by corporate restructuring and growth of non-regular employment have become serious problems. Women are the most vulnerable to such negative impacts. To ensure that globalization will be beneficial to the empowerment of women, NJWA calls for rights-based international rules to be established to regulate profit-oriented economic activity.

In 2004, the world witnessed abnormal weather and a massive natural disaster that hit various regions. The socially vulnerable, including children, women and the elderly, are affected most by the damage. We welcome the recent effort by governments to establish a reconstruction assistance system centred on United Nations efforts for the nations hit by the unprecedented tsunami disaster. We further call on governments to take concerted actions to address global warming and environmental destruction, which are said to be major causes of frequent disaster,

and to promote sustainable development and environment protection based on gender perspectives. We reiterate that resources should be invested not in war or armaments, but in the protection of lives and the environment.

NJWA urges the governments in this Commission to reaffirm their commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome Document of 2000, and to express their political will to promote implementation of the agreed goals.